Development of Primary Education in the State.

READ—

Letter No. 503, dated 22nd—24th December 1926, from the Secretary, Board of Education, submitting proposals for future development in regard to the organisation and administration of Primary Education in the State and indicating that the ultimate aim should be to make local bodies the prime authority responsible for providing and managing elementary mass education, subject to Central Control in such form and measure as the existing conditions make necessary.

Correspondence ending with letter No. H. C. 721—26-27, dated the 16th March 1927, from the Inspector-General of Education, furnishing his remarks on the proposals of the Board.

ORDER No. D. 7139-66—Edn. 196-26-3, DATED 10TH JANUARY 1928.

Pending the introduction of an Elementary Education Regulation fixing on a statutory basis the responsibility of the different local bodies and of the Department in respect of Elementary Education in the matter of management, control, administration and financial provision, the Board of Education recommends the following arrangements with a view to prepare the ground for the devolution to local bodies of powers and duties in regard to Education:—

(1) That Select Village Panchayets be given powers (a) to disburse the salaries of teachers, (b) to grant leave to teachers for any period not exceeding 15 days subject to the approval of Assistant Inspectors, (c) to appoint substitutes in these vacancies, (d) to maintain and repair school buildings and equipment; and to visit the schools and report to the Assistant Inspectors on their condition, (e) to be responsible for the enforcement of the Compulsory Education Regulation in rural areas where it is in operation and to exercise the functions of Attendance Committees.

(2) That with a view to ensure the proper discharge of the above functions by Village Panchayets the Department at present, and the District Boards after they take over control of Education should have powers of supervision over the work of the Village Panchayets.

(3) That powers of control and management to the extent above described be given to all Municipal Councils and control subject to the general control of the Department, be given to those that offer to meet one-third of the total cost of Primary Education, as in the Bangalore City Municipality.

(4) That powers of control in accordance with the declared policy of Government be given to such of the District Boards that come forward with definite and suitable proposals to take over administrative control and bear a definite proportion of the cost, without prejudice to the delegation of powers, to Village Panchayets and without prejudice to the powers of the Education Department to exercise such control.

(5) That Educational Conferences and Exhibitions be held by District Boards and Municipal Councils and that Educational Experiments be conducted under expert guidance to adapt educational methods and organisations to local conditions and to render them more effective.

(6) That Compulsory Education be introduced in rural areas wherever the Village Panchayets apply for its introduction and undertake responsibility for a reasonable proportion of the expenditure.

(7) That the Village Schools be made a sort of local community centre and that villagers be encouraged to constitute and control school funds by voluntary collections in cash or kind during the harvest or on social and religious occasions.

Government have considered these proposals in cosultation with the Director of Public Instruction and agree that it is correct in principle to transfer the management of Primary Schools to local bodies. In the present condition of working of these bodies, however, it will not be possible to effect the transfer either at once or generally all over the State, but it has to be carried out by stages regulated by the ability of the local bodies to discharge their responsibility. It is essential that the Department of Public Instruction should have the power to see that the schools are maintained in a state of efficiency and that a minimum standard is maintained in regard to the instruction imparted in them. The Department of Public Instruction should therefore exercise control to the extent of seeing that there is conformity to prescribed standards as the qualifications of teachers, scales of pay, curricula of studies, text-books, equipment, and school room space. It should also have powers of inspection necessary to secure the educational efficiency of the schools.

Government direct that control on the lines of the recommendation of the Board of Education subject to the limitations indicated above, be delegated to such of the District Boards and Municipalities as offer to contribute not less than one-third of the total cost of Primary Education, in their jurisdiction, their present contributions in the shape of local and education cesses being taken into account.

The Director of Public Instruction is requested to take early steps for submitting proposals for the passing of an Elementary Education Regulation dealing with the duties and responsibilities of the State and the local bodies respectively in the matter of Elementary Education.

N. RAMA RAO,